

# **“Freely Give”**

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Very many lessons we could learn last week from the “circulation of the water.” We did not have space to talk about them then, but if I should ask you to tell me what the great lesson is, I think that some of you at least would answer, “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

“The ocean, itself the source of all our springs and fountains, receives the streams from every land but takes to give; the mists ascending from its bosom fall in showers to water the earth, that it may bring forth and bud.”

God does not give to anything a blessing for itself alone. The cloud which He loads with moisture is only a channel through which He may pour out the rain upon the earth. And the earth again receives God’s blessing in the rain only that it may give it out in food, in fruit and flowers, in springs and brooks and rivers, to bless all the creatures that live upon it, and carry a fresh supply of water to the sea.

And God does not give any blessing to any of His children for them to keep to themselves, but He always wants through them to give it to some one else. Perhaps you will at first hardly think this can be true. “Surely the food that I eat, the fresh air that I breathe, and the sunshine that makes me glad, are for me! How can I give these out to others?” Let us see.

How does the earth give out to you the life that it drinks in in the rain? It brings forth “seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.” You eat the food that the earth brings forth, and what do you receive in it?—Life,—the very life that the earth received in the rain.

But this life is not for yourself. You are a part of God’s great plan, His “circle of blessing” about which we learned last week. He gives His life to you only that through you it may be given out in blessing to others. And giving your life for others does not mean dying for them, but living for others every day.

Jesus wants you to give out the life that He gives to you just in the same way that the earth does—in fruit. He says, “I am the True Vine,” “ye are the branches;” “herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit.” The branch, you know, has no life of its own, but the life of the vine runs into it, and is given out in beautiful clusters of fruit. The vine gives its life, through the branches, in fruit.

And so you, the branches of Jesus, the true Vine, have no life of your own, but He is pouring His life into you all the time. He breathes it into you, as you have learned, in the air, gives it to you in the food that the earth brings forth, and sheds it upon you in the sweet life-giving sunlight. And why?—That through you, His branches, He may give out that life in fruit to bring blessing to others.

If you do not know them already, you can read in the fifth chapter of Galatians the fruits that the branches of Jesus Christ, the true Vine, bear: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Every little deed of love, each kind and gentle word or action, is Jesus giving out through you in service for others, the life which He has given you in air and food. The joy that the bright sunshine brings into your hearts, He wants through you to shed upon others, making them happy too.

If we think that the life we have is our own, we shall keep it to ourselves, and it will not do any good to anybody. But if we know and remember that it is the life of Jesus, the true Vine, and we are only little branches that have no life of their own, we shall let Him do what He will with His life in us. Then we shall "freely give" out in the fruits of love, joy, peace, and gentleness, that life which we have "freely received" from Him.